

Smoking During Pregnancy – Massachusetts

- 7.7 percent of mothers in Massachusetts reported smoking cigarettes during their pregnancies.*
- 16.6 percent of teenage mothers, age 19 and under, reported smoking cigarettes during their pregnancy, more than twice the statewide average.*
- 18.0% of mothers with less than a high school education reported smoking cigarettes while pregnant, a rate 20 times higher than among mothers with a college degree (0.9%).*
- 17.5 percent of mothers receiving Medicaid reported smoking cigarettes during their pregnancy, more than twice the statewide rate.*
- Babies born to smokers are 1.5 to 3.5 times more likely to have low birth weights than babies born to nonsmoking mothers¹. Low birth weight is associated with slower mental and physical development and other poor health outcomes.
- Smoking during pregnancy may impair normal fetal brain and nervous system development².
- Babies whose mothers smoked during their pregnancy are more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome than those whose mothers did not smoke⁴.
- Smoking during pregnancy has been linked to 10 percent of all infant deaths³.
- The direct medical costs of a complicated birth are 66 percent higher for smokers than for non-smokers, reflecting the greater severity of complications and the more intensive care that is required⁴.

* Based on self-reported smoking as collected on the 2003 Massachusetts birth certificate.

¹ A publication of the CDC Chronic Disease Prevention Unit called “Preventing Chronic Diseases: Investing Wisely in Health – Preventing Smoking During Pregnancy”, April 2003. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/pe_fctsheets/pe_smoking.htm.

² Dempsey DA and Benowitz NL. Risks and benefits of nicotine to aid smoking cessation in pregnancy (review article), Drug Safety 2001 24(4):277-322.

³ Women and smoking: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General; Washington, DC, 2001, p 296.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1997). Medical-care expenditures attributable to cigarette smoking during pregnancy — United States, 1995. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 46(44), 1048-1050.